DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

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WEST GERMAN THAW?

Democratic Germany Cuts People's Army

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25% Reduction in Armed Forces

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FULL DETAILS IN THIS ISSUE

"Adenauer Must Go" — Social Democrat Leader

The West German Government, headed by Chancellor Adenauer, must resign if it is unable to adapt itself to the changed conditions in world politics, West German Social Democratic leader Erich Ollenhauer stated in a foreign affairs debate in the West German Parliament on June 29th.

"West Germany must revise its relations with NATO: any other policy means that we abandon all chance of reuniting Germany" Erich Ollenhauer stated. The Social Democratic leader was joined in his attacks on Chancellor Adenauer's policy by representatives of the Free Democrats and the Refugee Party, two parties which recently left the government coalition because of their disagreement with government policy, particularly their disagreement with the lack of any initiative directed towards attaining the unity of Germany.

Political observers in Bonn regarded the foreign affairs debate as sign of a general thaw in West German parliamentary politics. From the formation of the West German state in 1949 until a few months ago, all important West German parties, with the exception of the Communist Party, have given their general support to Chancellor Adenauer's foreign policy, his military alliance with the western block, and his policy of regarding German reunification as a question of "liberating" East Germany.

The parliamentary debate showed a considerable stiffening of the attitude of the opposition parties, which all demanded that the government show some real initiative in the question of reunification, and not limit itself to a "policy of strength" aimed at a "liberation" of East Germany at some date in the future. At the same time political observers pointed out that none of the opposition parties had yet gone so far as to demand direct negotiations between the governments of the West German Federal Republic and the East German Democratic

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DEMOCRATIC GERMAN RELEASES 19,000 PRISONERS

The authorities of the German Democratic Republic have released over 19,000 people from prison in the past few weeks, it was officially announced in Berlin on June 21st.

The majority of those released were persons sent to prison for offences arising from the "cold war" atmosphere. The official announcement said that under present conditions it had become possible to correct the sentences passed at this time. Another large group of persons released were persons convicted of war crimes, and who have already served a considerable part of their sentences. These persons were released with the object of relaxing tension in Germany: West German propaganda has always made much capital out of these war criminals still in prison.

The official announcement stated in part:

"1. The President has ordered the release of 691 persons who formerly belonged, or who now belong, to the Social Democratic Party: these releases are an expression of the strength of our social order, and of our desire to serve the reunification of Germany. These persons had been justly sentenced because of criminal offences which they had committed on the orders of the 'East Bureau' of the Social Democratic Party, which is allied with the imperialist intelligence agencies.

"2. Sentences imposed by the courts under the influence of the 'cold war' waged against the German Democratic Republic by the imperialist powers and the German Federal Republic have been revised. The President and the Government decided on the release of 11,896 persons serving sentence for criminal and other offences: the releases take the form either of a pardon or of conditional release. Sentence has been suspended in the case of 3169 persons who had been sentenced to terms of less than one year.

"3. As already announced the Government has decided to release persons sentenced by Soviet Military Tribunals or German courts because of crimes committed in connection with the Hitlerite war. Up to June 19th 1956 a total of 3308 such persons were released. Eleven war criminals who committed particularly terrible crimes in concentration camps remain in prison."

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Republic, which must obviously be held if any concrete steps to reunification are to be taken.

Here are some of the points made by Erich Ollenhauer in his speech, which presented the official viewpoint of the Social Democratic Party, the most powerful opposition party in West Germany:

"The Chancellor (Adenauer) and the Foreign Minister (Von Brentano) have again expressed the opinion that there has been no decisive change in the international situation in the past few months. They therefore believe that it is not necessary to revise the policy of the government. We Social Democrats find this policy extremely dangerous, since it means an abandonment of the possibility of the Federal Republic taking part in the present negotiations on international relaxation.

"We have two reasons for our belief. The first is the fact that the inclusion of the Federal Republic in NATO has considerably worsened the prospects for the restoration of German unity, and has made it extremely difficult to reach this goal. West Germany must revise its relations with NATO: any other policy means that we abandon all chance of reuniting Germany.

"The second fact which we have taken into consideration is that the Chancellor and the government cling to a foreign political conception which is being contradicted more and more by the course of international politics...

"We do not believe that recent changes in the Soviet Union mean that the Soviet Union has abandoned the Bolshevist system: but we see that these changes have made negotiations on relaxation much more feasible today than they were a few years ago. And if anyone should draw the consequences from this fact, then it must be the German people.

"It is impossible under these conditions that the government should simply cling to the policy which it adopted at the time of the Korean war. This attitude can only lead to a complete isolation of the Federal Republic in the international field.

"If the Chancellor, the government, and the remnants of the coalition do not find a way to adapt themselves to the changed conditions, then it is time that they hand on their responsibilities to a newly elected parliament and a new government.

"The demand that free elections should be held in all four zones of Germany is correct, but the demand that the Soviet Union should from the very outset accept free elections in the whole of Germany, and membership of a reunited Germany in NATO is a completely unrealistic policy: such a policy can lead us nowhere.

"In the framework of the attempts to reach agreement in Europe, the question of the international military status of reunited Germany is of decisive importance. We Germans ourselves must make concrete proposals as to this future status. The Federal Republic must take the initiative in finding out what all the powers involved foresee as the status of a reunited Germany in a European security system acceptable to both East and West. This means that the Federal Republic must be ready to discuss leaving NATO if a new and more satisfactory solution of the European security problem can be found. This means of course that the membership of East Germany in the Warsaw Pact must also be discussed.

"Such negotiations on the international position of a reunited Germany demand not only negotiations with the western powers, but also a normalisation of the relations between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union."

In the course of his speech Erich Ollenhauer also called for a normalisation of relations between West Germany and the eastern-European countries, particularly Poland and Czechoslovakia. He also called for every effort to be made to closen economic, cultural and personal relations with East Germany, but rejected negotiations with the East German Government. He claimed that direct negotiations between the Governments of East and West Germany would mean that the four great powers would thus be excused of their responsibility to work for the reunification of the country. "There is no doubt, however" Erich Ollenhauer declared, "that when practical steps are taken to reunify Germany, representatives of both parts of Germany will have to confer on the steps to be taken. We believe that such talks are only possible in the framework of an agreement on principles reached by the four powers."

Erich Ollenhauer also opposed the introduction of conscription in West Germany, which would lead inevitably to the introduction of conscription in East Germany, and thus to a great hardening of the frontier at present dividing the two halves of the country.

WEST GERMAN PAPERS SAY . . .

"In Parliament and public opinion an increasing number of people are critising the conclusions which Adenauer draws for his foreign policy from his judgment of Soviet policy. Members of Parliament of all parties... must join together to seek a new path. Since Adenauer visited Moscow in September last year we have had a policy of stagnation: but politics are something living, and it is high time that we achieve this."

"Sueddeutsche Zeitung" Munich, June 29th 1956

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"Adenauer is a 'man of the past'. He is not simply exposed to personal attacks. He was been driven into isolation, and is seen in foreign countries as a European Syngman Rhee or Chiang Kai-Shek because he has been unable to face up to the new situation. In this new situation the political isolation of the Federal Republic is only a question of time."

"Neue Rhein Zeitung", June 28th 1956

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"The world already knows that Adenauer is no longer the voice of the German people. Until now Dr Adenauer has always tried to force through the reunification of Germany, with the support of the three western powers, against the Soviet Union. This is the decisive logical mistake which can be detected in all of his speeches... He insists that the western world should follow his lead: he wants to continue the cold war, but no-one in the west is seriously disposed to follow him."

"Westfaelische Rundschau", June 28th 1956

PEOPLE'S ARMY CUT ONE QUARTER

Democratic Germany Slashes Army Size: No Conscription

The planned strength of the People's Army now being organised in the German Democratic Republic will be cut by one quarter, it was officially announced in Berlin on July 1st.

The cut means that the People's Army will be composed of 90,000 volunteers, instead of the 120,000 originally planned. The official announcement reiterated that the army would be raised on an entirely coluntary basis, and that no form of conscription will be introduced.

Despite the cut in the East German target figures, the West German Government is still going ahead with its plans to raise a 500,000 man Wehrmacht, commanded by Hitlerite generals. West German Government spokesmen in Bonn stated that there was no intention of reducing the target figure, despite the relaxation of tension in Europa, and all-round army cuts in East European countries. The West German Parliament was scheduled to take final steps to introduce conscription to the new Wehrmacht on July 6th.

News of the cuts in the armed forces of the German Democratic Republic was given on July 1st in an official government announcement in Berlin which stated:

"The reductions in army strength carried out by the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies have shown the possibility of a general disarmament, and have filled the peoples with hope that the peace of the world can be maintained.

"The German people have a particularly great responsibility for the maintenance of peace in Europa. The re-establishment of German militarism in West Germany cannot be reconciled with developing relaxation of tension. There must be a German contribution to the relaxation of tension through an agreement between the two German states on a limitation of army strength, a ban on stationing atomic weapons on German soil, and non-introduction of conscription. Such an act of peace would also help the reunification of Germany on a peaceful basis.

"The cabinet of the German Democratic Republic has therefore decided on the following steps:

1. **The total strength of the People's Army, fixed at 120,000, will be reduced by 30,000: the new total strength will be fixed at 90,000.**
2. **The financial means made available through the reduction in the strength of the People's Army will be used for strengthening peace economy.**
3. **The People's Army shall be raised by the recruitment of volunteers."**

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On the same date the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, main government party in the German Democratic Republic, appealed to the West German Social Democratic Party to take joint action to prevent the introduction of conscription in any part of Germany. The letter stated in part:

"The question of the relaxation of tension and the maintenance of peace is of the very greatest importance fort the German working class and for the entire German nation. We therefore hope that it may be possible, in this situation, to put aside the differences of opinion which we have on other questions. We propose that we should have joint discussions on the questions of disarmament and the prevention of conscription. Our proposal is based upon the old Socialist view that our workers' parties have a particular responsibility for the destiny of the people: we can meet this responsibility if we discuss and reach agreement together."

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The People's Army in the German Democratic Republic is being raised on the basis of a law passed by the People's Chamber on January 18th this year. The decision to form the army was only taken after West Germany had already begun to recruit a new Wehrmacht. First units of the new People's Army, the overwhelming majority of whose officers are former workers, veterans in the struggle for socialism, made their first public appearance on May 1st this year, when they marched in the May Day demonstration in Berlin.

The 1956 budget of the German Democratic Republic earmarked 974 million marks, less than three percent of state expenditure, for the upkeep of the People's Army. The big reduction in army strength just announced means that expenditure on the army will be reduced to little over two percent of the budget.

STUDENTS OPPOSE CALL-UP

Appeal to West Germany

Conscription to the armed forces in any part of Germany was unanimously opposed by students from all universities and technical colleges in the German Democratic Republic who met in Berlin on June 25th.

The students issued an appeal to the students of West Germany, calling on them to fight the introduction of the call-up there, and proposing the formation of an all-German student body. This student body should approach the governments of both German states with the demand that conscription should not be introduced, and with the request for inter-governmental negotiations on a limitation of the armed forces in both parts of Germany.

(The Government of the German Democratic Republic has repeatedly declared that it has no intention of introducing conscription in the Republic, and that it is in favour of negotiations between the two German states on the limitation of armed forces.)

CROWN PRINCE ON VISIT

Trade Agreement With Yemen

A trade agreement between the German Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Yemen was signed in Berlin on June 30th at the conclusion of a one-week visit to the Republic by a Yemenite government delegation, headed by Emir Seif el-Islam Mohammed el-Badr, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Yemen.

During the course of the visit the Crown Prince and his delegation visited factories and theatres in many parts of Democratic Germany, and had talks with President Wilhelm Pieck, Prime Minister Grotewohl, and other ministers.

An official communique signed by Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl and Emir el-Badr, which was issued on June 30th, stated in part:

"Discussions were held on the development of economic relations between the two countries, and on various international problems affecting the two countries. These negotiations confirmed the wish of the two states to maintain the old friendship which has always existed between the German and the Yemenite people; to extend this friendship; and to establish normal relations between them at the opportune time. Until this time comes it was considered suitable to extend economic relations and trade exchanges. For this purpose a trade and payments agreement was concluded between the German Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Yemen.

"In the negotiations both sides agreed that both countries are to some extent faced by similar problems. These are mainly the problems of the struggle of both countries for their national goals in both political and economic fields."

The communique stated that both sides had agreed that peace must be maintained, and that international relations must be based upon the principles of the United Nationas and the Bandung Resolution. The communique continued:

"The German question was also discussed. Both sides are convinced that Germans themselves should solve the national German question by means of fraternal negotiations between the two parties directly concerned.

"Both sides agree that political problems in the Near East should be solved without outside intervention, and in accordance with the desires of the peoples of the Near East, in accordance with the UN Charter and the resolution of the Bandung Conference. Both sides are convinced that the just demands of the Arab people can be fulfilled in a peaceful manner, and that there should be no foreign intervention which makes more difficult the fulfillment of these demands."

"TREASON" FRAME-UP AGAINST COMMUNISTS

Six leading members of the West German Communist Party were brought before the West German Federal Court in Karlsruhe on June 25th, charged with "high treason".

The charges against the six accused are concerned solely with their preparation and distribution in 1952 of the Communist "Programme for the National Reunification of Germany", the legally published programme of the legal Communist Party. The prosecuting attorney, in his opening speech, stated that this programme was regarded as treasonable, since it called for the removal of the Adenauer Government.

The six accused, Walter Fisch, Fritz Rische, Jupp Ledwohn, Richard Scheringer, Karl Zemke and Christl Zellner, are all members of the Central Board of the Communist Party. Fritz Rische and Jupp Ledwohn have been held "under investigation" for more than two years awaiting trial: Walter Fisch informed the court in writing that he was not appearing for trial, since he regarded the trial as unconstitutional.

* * *

For many of the accused this is the second time that they have been charged in court with high treason. Fritz Rische was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment by the nazis on exactly this charge: Jupp Ledwohn was found guilty of high treason by a nazi court in Dortmund December 12th 1933, but escaped imprisonment by going underground. Walter Fisch was imprisoned by the nazis for two years on a treason charge.

Travel Restrictions Eased

Far-reaching relaxation in various travel restrictions between the different parts of Germany was announced in Berlin at the end of June. Karl Maron, Minister of the Interior of the German Democratic Republic, announced that the grant of permits to West Germans to visit East Germany would be eased even further, and that in urgent cases such permits could be granted telegraphically. Measures were being taken to speed up frontier controls on the interzonal border. "Applications by West Germans to visit the Republic are granted today almost without exception, even in the case of persons who fled the Republic" Minister Maron stated. Measures were being taken to ease still further the grant of permits to East Germans who wanted to visit West Germany.

Waldemar Schmidt, Deputy Lord Mayor of East Berlin, announced that controls between the German Democratic Republic and the Democratic Sector of Berlin would be greatly relaxed: all customs examinations would be ended along this border. (Minimum controls will have to be maintained for travellers from Berlin to the surrounding German Democratic Republic because of the position of the whole of Berlin as a sort of free city, which can be freely visited by Germans from East and West, and by foreign visitors.)

Deputy Lord Mayor Schmidt proposed that representatives of the city administrations in East and West Berlin should meet to discuss measures to relax tension between the two halves of Berlin. He suggested that such negotiations could lead to a removal of the restrictions which at present make it difficult for West Berliners to travel into the surrounding territory of the German Democratic Republic. For the success of such negotiations it would be very helpful if the West Berlin authorities would ban the espionage and sabotage organisations which are openly active in West Berlin.

Atom Power in 1960

The first atomic power station in the German Democratic Republic is scheduled to go into operation in 1960, Deputy Prime Minister Fritz Selbmann announced on June 18th.

Cheaper Phones for the Blind

Blind telephone subscribers in the German Democratic Republic will in future pay no rent for their phones, but will only pay for the calls actually made, it was announced in Berlin.

SPAIN 1936–1956

TWENTY YEARS LATER

Just twenty years ago, on July 18th 1936, General Franco, aided by German nazis and Italian fascists, rose against the democratic government of the Spanish Republic.

Over five thousand German anti-fascists were amongst the tens of thousands from all nations who rallied to the support of the Spanish Republic, and who fought in the International Brigades.

These German anti-fascists were not only aiding the Spanish Republic: they were also fighting against the Hitler terror in Germany: the marching song of the Eleventh International Brigade, mainly composed of Germans, stated proudly:

"Even if we fight for seven years
We shall see our Germany again
And when we march proudly in
We shall sink the remains of the swastika in
the River Rhine."

But the fight lasted longer — eleven years in all, and only about 500 of the original 5000 German volunteers lived to see Germany again. The others had fallen in Spain, in the underground resistance fight all over Europe, or had been murdered in Hitler's concentration camps.

But the handful of survivors went on with the fight, and now they are fighting to help build the first decent democratic German state in history: the German Democratic Republic.

Today, two veterans of the Spanish Republican Army are ministers in the government of the German Democratic Republic: dozens of other veterans hold key posts in the People's Police and in socialised industry.

On the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the Spanish war the German veterans of the International Brigade will be coming together in Berlin to pledge themselves to continue the fight until the whole of Germany has become a peaceable and positive force in the world.

* * *

But we should not forget that there were other Germans in Spain too: the Condor Legion composed of thousands of nazi officers and soldiers, sent to Spain by Hitler to support the fascist revolt. Veterans of the Condor Legion were not only given a great reception when they returned in 1939 to nazi Germany: they are treated as especially honoured citizens by the Government of the West German Federal Republic. Many have volunteered for service in the new West German Wehrmacht, and the West German Government has officially recognised their service as mercenaries in Spain in granting them higher pensions and greater seniority in the armed forces than other old Wehrmacht members.

* * *

There are two states in Germany today: the West German Federal Republic, and the East German Democratic Republic. The Government of the West German Federal Republic honours the Condor Legion, the murderers of Guernica.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic honours the men of the International Brigade. You can take your choice.

MAKING PARLIAMENT WORK BETTER

By Dr. Johannes Dieckmann

(The author of this article, Dr Johannes Dieckmann, is Chairman or "Speaker" of the People's Chamber, the parliament of the German Democratic Republic. Dr Dieckmann, aged 63, is deputy chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party, one of the five parties represented in the People's Chamber. Before the Hitler era he was General Secretary of the Liberal German People's Party. In this article, which originally appeared as an interview in the East Berlin weekly newspaper "Sonntag", Dr Dieckmann outlines some of the steps which he believes should be taken to improve the working of the People's Chamber. His proposals include more impromptu speeches, more publicity for the work of parliamentary commissions, and the introduction of a question time.)

There are several reasons for the present lack of public interest in the work of the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic, and not the least important is the fact that People's Chamber sessions are often definitely boring.

One reason for this is that there are no professional parliamentarians in our Republic, and our members have not the ready tongues of lawyers — so often heard in western countries and in the West German Federal Parliament.

Nearly all our representatives are working people — workers, office employees or peasants — who do not aspire to be brilliant speakers and who are used to expressing their thoughts simply.

This is an advantage — not a disadvantage; but it can become a disadvantage when a speaker has to put his thoughts down on paper and then read them out, more or less fluently.

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Members of parliament must get away from this and overcome their shyness of speaking without a manuscript. They should not be afraid of making a slip of the tongue.

Another thing speakers must avoid is the attempt to press everything into one speech. We should get away from the habit of turning every People's Chamber speech into a history of mankind up to the year 1956 and bringing up an endless number of problems. Our motto should be: Away with the manuscript! Let's get down to the business in hand!

Sessions will be much livelier if members do not stick rigidly to their own prepared speeches, but respond to remarks from previous speakers and to interjections to their own speeches.

On the other hand, we should avoid imitating parliamentary practices common in the west merely for the sake of getting over this monotony. We have taken an entirely new road since 1945 and we should not leave this road. In our state our parties do not need to draw the attention of the people to themselves by means of tricks and byplay, and no party needs to demonstrate its own importance by attacking other parties. Of course, there are differences of opinion in our state and between our political parties. We have developed a system of expressing these differences and of working them out without damaging the whole.

We have already begun to issue reports of parliamentary commission meetings to our press, and journalists can often attend such meetings and report upon them.

I think we should continue and develop this. I believe our journalists should also write their own reports on these meetings, so that more lively and less formal reports of the proceedings reach the public.

But the press itself must recognise the importance of commission work more clearly, and not exclude reports because of "lack of space".

Full reports of the clash of opinions in these commissions would give people a much better understanding of the workings of our parliamentary system.

Another important question is how to bring more of our citizens into direct contact with the work of their representatives.

The first requirement here is a close contact between members of parliament and their voters. This contact was achieved during the

Dr. Johannes Dieckmann

parliamentary campaign of 1954, when candidates reported on their past work in thousands of meetings in towns and villages, answered questions and undertook to deal with outstanding problems. The close contact achieved at that time should be maintained, and many M. P. s have been able to do this.

It depends upon the M. P. himself how he succeeds in his dual task. A member of the People's Chamber who simply regards himself as an extended arm of the government cannot do his job properly, for according to our constitution, the People's Chamber has the task of controlling and watching over the entire work of the government.

We have abolished the division of power in the German Democratic Republic. Legislative and executive power combine to make one whole. The government is the "business committee" of the People's Chamber. It does its entire work on behalf of the People's Chamber and on the basis of the resolutions passed by the People's Chamber. Since the members of the government are almost all members of the People's Chamber, they also take part directly in the decisions of that body.

The genuine democratic content of this complete interlocking of legislative and executive state power, has not been fully understood so far, and the measures now in preparation for broadening the bases of democracy will help to make this clearer.

Our M. P. s must get into closer contact with their voters and must be more conscious of their responsibility towards them. On the other hand, the executive organs of our state power must restrict themselves more closely to their actual executive duties and refrain from encroaching on the sphere of activity of our M. P. s. We shall then be able to give our new democracy full meaning at all levels.

Regular public consultations are one of the most important means to this end, and must be utilised to the full. Here M. P. s are available to give advice, receive suggestions and look into criticisms of voters, to report on their own work and explain the laws and general policy of our workers' and peasants' state.

Our constituencies are in general much too large. It will be advisable to make them considerably smaller in future.

I think that a "question time" should be introduced in the People's Chamber, in which M. P.s' could query ministers on questions of general importance which come to them from their constituencies. These questions should if possible be answered at once in the same session, or when this is not possible a written answer should follow within a few days.

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SPAIN: 1936–1956

"HERE IS THE LINCOLN BATTALION"

By Willi Bredel

(Willi Bredel, former Hamburg harbour worker, today one of the leading writers in Democratic Germany, fought in Spain as War Commissar of the Thaelmann Battalion, composed of German anti-fascists. On this page we present a few short extracts from one of the chapters of his book "Begegnung am Ebro" (Meeting on the Ebro), published in Berlin in 1949 by the Verlag Lied der Zeit. This chapter deals with the fight for the town of Quinto on the Ebro on August 29th 1937)

Schorsch, Bert, Karl and I were marching in the first rank. We, together with the other comrades, were all in unusually good spirits. It was still very early, and the clear day promised to be very hot; possibly we should have to go into the attack when a heat haze was lying over this bare whitish grey desert. But nobody seemed to be thinking of this.

But I was mistaken. Karl brought the conversation round to the fight ahead of us. The fascists had been here for a whole year, and they would certainly have built good defensive positions, he said. Would we manage to take them?

Bert spoke of the comrades who were marching up to the front with us. He thought that they were showing the greatest proof of solidarity. Nobody had forced them to come to Spain. They were making the greatest sacrifices.

"What do you mean: sacrifice?" asked Karl. "Most of them have been through much worse things, and made much greater sacrifices."

Bert did not agree. The international volunteers, he said, had all had a life without war, without tanks, bombers, barrages and bayonet charges.

Then Schorsch (the battalion commander, trans.) intervened in the discussion. This might be true for the Scandinavian, Dutch, Belgian and Swiss comrades in the battalion, he said, but not for us Germans. For the German antifascists this was just the continuation of a war which we had been fighting for four years. Whether we were fighting on the Spree or the Ebro, the Ruhr or the Manzanares, these were just different sectors of one and the same war.

He knew hundreds or thousands who would give half of the life remaining to them if they could march against the fascists with a rifle in their hands: our comrades in the concentration camps and prisons. And the comrades at home who had been fighting illegally and in isolation for weeks, months and years were doing much more than us: they were fighting on a much more horrible sector of the front than we, although they did not have to face tanks, bombers and bayonets.

It was easy to say: death is death. But for his part he would far rather die on the battlefield than on the executioner's block. We were soldiers of the Thaelmann Battalion and proud of it, but we should not feel superior to our great battalion of comrades imprisoned and working underground at home: what we were doing was little enough compared to what they were doing.

His words touched me deeply. They left a particularly deep impression because he spok so simply and without pathos. Schorsch had been in concentration camp, just like Karl and myself, and he was completely right. None of us would have hesitated if given the alternative: one year in a concentration camp or ten hard bloody years of armed struggle against the fascists.

Today was August 29th. It was an important date for me. Four years ago on this date I had been beaten for the sixteenth time in ten days, and this time in a particularly bestial manner . . .

(Bredel then describes the terrible battle for Quinto. The battalion commander was killed, other leaders of the battalion dead or wounded, and Bredel, although only two weeks at the front, suddenly finds himself charged with the task of leading the whole battalion in battle.)

From the little grove of olive trees I saw many soldiers approaching in open formation. The sun glinted on their helmets and their bayonets. They seemed to be unusually tall, and as they came nearer I saw that some of them were Negroes.

"They seem to be from the Fifteenth Brigade (The English-speaking brigade, trans.). What are they doing here?" asked Fried.

The first of them reached us: a group of officers. A tall thin man with a long narrow bird-like face saluted and said: "Here is the Lincoln Battalion. What shall we do?"

I scraped together the remnants of the English I had learned at school and asked: "What's your name, comrade?"

"Jack, commander of the Lincolns" he replied . . .

The lanky American stood and watched me. I considered. In a few minutes the attack would begin. This attack would decide whether we could capture the town today, and this might make a lot of difference to the further progress of the offensive. The American comrades had come to help us and give their support: they would have to join the attack.

(But Bredel, inexperienced as he was, could get no clear instructions from brigade staff as to what he should do.)

I was determined to do the only thing that I felt to be right. I gave the American commander the instructions I had already given to my company commanders: attack at one-forty, immediately after bomber preparation.

"O.K." said the American . . . What happened then happened very quickly. Jack sent his men forward, those who had the furthest to go going first. Some of the Americans tightened their helmet straps as they ran. Three Negroes, with fixed bayonets, ran together. One of them was smiling broadly . . .

Now the German comrades were due to attack. I ran out to get a better view. Yes, the first of them had risen from the earth, and were running, together with the Americans, towards the enemy positions. From the olive grove came four tanks and raced towards the town, shooting as they drove. Immediately behind them came the comrades of the Thaelmann and the Lincoln Battalion.

I ran to the field telephone, reported to brigade staff that the first and second fascist lines had been overrun, that the cemetery was just being occupied, and that we would proceed through the town to the banks of the Ebro.

When I turned from the phone, sweating and excited, I saw behind me a tall comrade, with the rank insignia of a First Lieutenant: he was not a member of our battalion.

"I am Max, the new commander" he said.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

As we recall on another page of this issue, only about 500 of the 5000 German anti-fascists who went to Spain to fight in the ranks of the International Brigade are still living: about 400 in the German Democratic Republic, and about one hundred in West Germany. Those who live in West Germany are still having to fight every inch of the way: many have been under government persecution in the past few years because they have gone on fighting for peace and socialism.

Honoured Citizens

But I want to mention in this column a few of those who are living and working in the German Democratic Republic, where they are honoured citizens, most of them in highly responsible positions.

For a start let us take Heinrich Rau, one-time staff officer in the International Brigade, today Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Internal and External Trade. Rau, a metal worker by trade, was caught by the nazis after the war in Spain ended, and was dragged by them through a succession of prisons and concentration camps. Unbroken by his terrible experiences he went to work again immediately after the war, and was for several years Chairman of the East German Economic Commission, the first post-war German central administrative body in East Germany.

Then there is his colleague Erwin Kramer, today Minister of Transport. A civil engineer by profession, he too fought in Spain, and survived the war by a miracle.

The chief of the People's Police in the Erfurt district is a former worker named Eberhard Koenig. He had to flee from nazi Germany in 1933 to avoid arrest, and went to Spain in 1936 as soon as the International Brigade was formed. He was seriously wounded in the battle of the Jarama river in February 1937. After the fall of Spain he was interned in France, and later in a punishment camp in North Africa. Released early in 1943 by the British Army, he served for a while in a British Pioneer Unit.

The chief of the personnel department of the nationally-owned Simson bicycle factory in Suhl is Wilhelm Holland, 63-year-old former worker who made his way from nazi Germany to Republican Spain and served there in an international anti-aircraft unit.

Max Friedemann was formerly a student heavy-weight boxing champion, and certainly looks it. He fought the fascists in Spain very efficiently too, and after the war he was for many years director of the nationally-owned Riesa Steel works, one of the biggest in Democratic Germany. Today he is State Secretary in the Ministry of Mines and Foundries.

The director of the Academy of Arts of the German Democratic Republic is Rudolf Engel, a former actor. He too fought in the International Brigade and was seriously wounded: later in France he helped to organise and then to command an important unit of the French Maquis.

A suprisingly large proportion of the prominent writers active in Democratic Germany today are also veterans of the Spanish struggle: I only have space to name Ludwig Renn, a former Prussian officer; Hans Marchwitza, former Ruhr miner; and Willi Bredel, Bodo Uhse, Kurt Stern und Eduard Claudius.

I could go on for pages with such lists and biographical details, but I think I have said enough to show what part veterans of the International Brigade are playing here.

Reciprocity

Readers often ask us what books by modern British and American authors are published and read in the German Democratic Republic. Plenty have been published in the past few years, mostly in large editions: without looking up the lists I can recall the names of Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Jack Lindsay, and Thomas Wolfe, and books by Grahame Greene, Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck are in preparation for early publication.

It is quite a good list, though there are still a number of gaps: but I hear from several publishers here that they expect to widen their selection of good modern British and American authors quite considerably in the near future. Sometimes they have been willing to publish the books, but the authors, particularly American authors, have been unwilling to allow their books to appear "behind the iron curtain".

But just for once let us turn the question round: What works by authors living in the German Democratic Republic have been published in Britain und America recently? I follow British and American book production fairly closely in the literary magazines, but I cannot recall a single work written by an author in the German Democratic Republic which has been published in the past five or six years in either Britain or America, with the sole exception of one or two plays by Bertolt Brecht which have been published in rather unsatisfactory translations in anthologies of modern plays issued in the United States.

Is this perhaps because no good books are being written here? Honestly I don't think so. A number of authors who live here in Democratic Germany are world famous: Arnold Zweig ("The Strange Case of Sergeant Grisha"), Ludwig Renn ("War"), and Anna Seghers ("The Seventh Cross"), for instance. All of these authors have produced important new works in the past ten years, but as far as I know none of them have been printed in English-speaking countries. In addition, dozens of other authors, old and young, have produced new books which are worthy of a place in contemporary international literature. If any publisher should read this column and be interested I shall be glad to suggest some of the books which I feel sure are worth translating.

Plenty of British and American authors are getting into print here: what about a bit of reciprocity?

Chip of Old Blockhead

West German Chancellor Adenauer's daughter, Lisbeth Werhahn, recently visited the United States with her father. The West Berlin newsmagazine "Spiegel" reported on June 27th that she gave the following impressions of America to an A. P. correspondent:

"Everything is different here: everything seems to me to be bigger and better. Even the birds sing louder. And the trees — I have never seen such lovely big trees."

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